



Ventura County Probation Agency

Calvin C. Remington
Director/Chief Probation Officer

January 19, 2005

Little Hoover Commission
925 L Street, Ste 805
Sacramento CA 95814

Dear Commissioners:

In addition to my role as Chief Probation Officer of Ventura County and member of the Board of Corrections, I also served as President of the Chief Probation Officers of California. I represented that group on several committees involving the Youth and Adult Corrections Agency. This allowed me to become somewhat familiar with the existing organization and the challenges faced by that Agency.

I support the restructuring of YACA, as I have come to believe that the existing structure does not provide authority to those who are responsible for the organization, nor does it provide for establishing accountability at all management levels. During the past 15 years, we have seen a remarkable expansion in the size of the organization, but the structure of the Agency has not changed accordingly. The proposed reorganization will provide the authority necessary for the Secretary of YACA to, in fact, have both the responsibility and authority to manage this organization.

I also support the change in the mission of the organization and believe that experience has shown that prisoners are released to the community without being prepared to re-enter society with the skills and motivation necessary to become productive citizens. Seventy percent of the inmates recidivate within five years, and the high rate of revocations substantially increases the cost of operations. As most inmates are eventually released to the community, improved recidivism rates do in fact improve public safety. Working more closely with community partners also improves public safety. Consequently, the change and the organization's mission, if successful, will both increase public safety and reduce cost.

I have some concerns with making the California Youth Authority simply a division within YACA. However, it is important to note that the Youth Authority now takes less than two percent of the juvenile population of county probation, and the population continues to drop on a weekly basis. This is a result of a number of factors—most importantly, strengthened juvenile justice systems on the county level that have reduced the need to send as many young people to the Youth Authority as in previous times. I think this trend will continue and, if so, the Youth Authority will soon have a much smaller, but more difficult and specialized population. Under this scenario, the proposed division may be appropriate.

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I also have some concerns about the change in the Board of Corrections. It has served the counties well in its current makeup. I agree that there is a need to expand that organization's responsibilities and have been assured that the relationship the counties now have with BOC will not change in the reorganization.

It is my pleasure to have the opportunity to testify before the Little Hoover Commission and I am looking forward to that opportunity.

Sincerely,

CALVIN C. REMINGTON
Director/Chief Probation Officer

CCR/mhv